

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

105th Congress
1st Session

Vote No. 200

July 24, 1997, 10:02 am
Page S-7989 Temp. Record

AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS/School Breakfast Start-Up Grants

SUBJECT: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 1998 . . . S. 1033.
Cochran motion to table the Wellstone modified amendment No. 972.

ACTION: MOTION TO TABLE AGREED TO, 54-45

SYNOPSIS: As reported, S. 1033, the Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 1998, will provide \$50.685 billion in new budget authority, 73 percent of which will be for mandatory spending programs and 75 percent of which will be for food welfare programs (both mandatory and discretionary).

The Wellstone modified amendment would appropriate \$5 million for fiscal year 1998 to create a program that would provide grants for starting or expanding school breakfast programs and summer food service programs for children (in that order of priority). The Secretary of Agriculture would make payments on a competitive basis to States and State educational agencies. School breakfast program grants would be required to go to schools with "a significant percentage" of students from low-income families, and which agreed to operate the school breakfast programs for at least 3 years. Summer food service program grants would be required to go to "service institutions," which would also have to agree to operate for at least 3 years. "Service institutions" would include public or private school food authorities, governments, youth camps, and Youth Sports Program sponsors. States and localities would be forbidden from diminishing their expenditures on school breakfast and summer food service programs as a result of the payments authorized by this amendment. (The amendment, in effect, would reauthorize the School Breakfast Start-Up Grant Program that was eliminated in last Congress' welfare reform bill. Elimination of that program was recommended by all major welfare reform proposals of the 104th Congress, including the President's proposal and the Senate Democrats' substitute proposal.)

Debate was limited by unanimous consent. Following debate, Senator Cochran moved to table the Wellstone amendment. Generally, those favoring the motion to table opposed the amendment; those opposing the motion to table favored the amendment.

Those favoring the motion to table contended:

Republican Members, Democratic Members, and the President are committed to making sure that all Americans have access to

(See other side)

YEAS (54)			NAYS (45)			NOT VOTING (1)	
Republicans (51 or 93%)		Democrats (3 or 7%)	Republicans (4 or 7%)	Democrats (41 or 93%)		Republicans (0)	Democrats (1)
Abraham	Hutchinson	Biden	D'Amato	Akaka	Kerrey		Kennedy- ^{2AN}
Allard	Hutchison	Glenn	DeWine	Baucus	Kerry		
Ashcroft	Inhofe	Johnson	Jeffords	Bingaman	Kohl		
Bennett	Kempthorne		Specter	Boxer	Landrieu		
Bond	Kyl			Breaux	Lautenberg		
Brownback	Lott			Bryan	Leahy		
Burns	Lugar			Bumpers	Levin		
Campbell	Mack			Byrd	Lieberman		
Chafee	McCain			Cleland	Mikulski		
Coats	McConnell			Conrad	Moseley-Braun		
Cochran	Murkowski			Daschle	Moynihan		
Collins	Nickles			Dodd	Murray		
Coverdell	Roberts			Dorgan	Reed		
Craig	Roth			Durbin	Reid		
Domenici	Santorum			Feingold	Robb		
Enzi	Sessions			Feinstein	Rockefeller		
Faircloth	Shelby			Ford	Sarbanes		
Frist	Smith, Bob			Graham	Torricelli		
Gorton	Smith, Gordon			Harkin	Wellstone		
Gramm	Snowe			Hollings	Wyden		
Grams	Stevens			Inouye			
Grassley	Thomas						
Gregg	Thompson						
Hagel	Thurmond						
Hatch	Warner						
Helms							

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

1—Official Business
2—Necessarily Absent
3—Illness
4—Other

SYMBOLS:

AY—Announced Yea
AN—Announced Nay
PY—Paired Yea
PN—Paired Nay

a nutritious diet, yet they each advanced welfare reform proposals last Congress that proposed the elimination of the School Breakfast Start-Up Grant Program. Given this fact, perhaps it is possible that the program is not quite as important as some of our colleagues would now have us believe. The program basically spent money to try to convince schools to join the Federal school breakfast and summer food service programs. Few new schools were joining, so the feeling was that the money would be better spent paying for those food welfare programs rather than trying to get more schools to join. Those Senators who say that they are concerned that efforts to balance the budget will result mainly in programs for the needy being cut should be reassured by the overall funding levels for food welfare programs in this bill; we note, for instance, that the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program will get a \$122 million increase to make sure that its rolls will not be cut. The real difference we have with the supporters of the Wellstone amendment is that we want to spend the money on the WIC program and similar programs that have a proven track record of success, rather than just continuing to spend money on programs of marginal value. The Federal Government does not need to advertise that it is willing to pay for school breakfasts; welfare advocacy groups, State governments, and others can assume that role. We fully understand that many Members may vote in favor of this amendment for political reasons. They may wish to overstate the value of this program so that they can say that they support feeding children but Members of the other political party do not. Politics aside, however, there are no practical reasons for resurrecting this marginal program. The money can be better spent elsewhere. Accordingly, we urge our colleagues to vote in favor of the motion to table.

Those opposing the motion to table contended:

We have offered this amendment previously but it has not yet been adopted. We will continue to offer it until the Senate accepts it. The Wellstone amendment would restore funding for the School Breakfast Start-Up Grant Program. That program, which was eliminated in last Congress' Welfare Reform Bill, provided funding to encourage school districts to start school breakfast programs. It was an outreach program that made people aware of the help that they could get for needy children. Today, there are 14.3 million children in America who receive free or reduced-price lunches, but 8 million of them do not receive free or reduced price breakfasts because their schools do not offer them. This tragedy needs to be corrected. Children should not have to come from home hungry, not getting to eat until they are served lunch. A study by the Food Research Action Council (a nutrition advocacy group) proves that children who have inadequate diets have greater learning and health problems than children who have enough to eat. Whether the measure is weight loss, fatigue, frequent colds, inability to concentrate, ear infections, dizziness, asthma, allergies, diarrhea, irritability, or frequent headaches, the evidence is incontrovertible. Hungry children cannot learn, so hungry children grow up to be uneducated adults who cannot earn. This amendment is very simple: it is about helping children. We urge our colleagues to help children by voting against the motion to table the Wellstone amendment.